From: Karen Engels
To: McGovern, Marc
Subject: BDS resolution
Date: Friday, April 20, 2018 3:46:39 PM

Hi Marc,

I usually don't venture outside of education politically, but I did want to reach out about the upcoming BDS resolution.

Like many (perhaps most?) Cambridge Jews, I fully oppose the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank as well as the government of Netanyahu. And yet, something about this resolution makes me uncomfortable. I think it's because, while I'm not sure that the resolution will significantly benefit Palestinians on the ground, I do worry about the toxicity it could inject into our local community.

One of the reasons I've made Cambridge my home is that this is a city where I can proudly be a Jewish-American AND where I can be in relationship and in community with diverse peoples from around the world. In particular, my children and I are closely connected to many members of the Muslim community in Cambridge. All three of my children have more Muslim than Jewish friends at school. Through these difficult times, Jews and Muslims in Cambridge have in fact been allies. During the assault on American-Muslims under Trump, Jews and Jewish organizations have rallied against the immigration ban. In turn, Muslims have supported Jews who are feeling increasingly uneasy as anti-semitism has hit close to home, with swastikas at CRLS and the desecration of the Holocaust Memorial in Boston.

I worry that this resolution is going to invite a lot of outside engagement from the Jewish hard-right, which in-turn will give Cantabrigians a false sense of the true Jewish community in Cambridge. I know that I have received flyers from pro-Israel organizations as far away as California trying to get me to speak against the resolution and to "stand with Jews against hate."

I *know* that this resolution is not coming from a place of antisemitism, that it is coming from a principled position of opposition to a foreign government that has committed humanitarian crimes. And I agree with the opposition. I just don't know if this resolution is going to produce positive change, and I worry that it will invite hate and vitriol. Given how much hate and vitriol there is on hand nationally, we don't need another dose.

Best,
Karen Engels (Graham and Parks teacher)
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